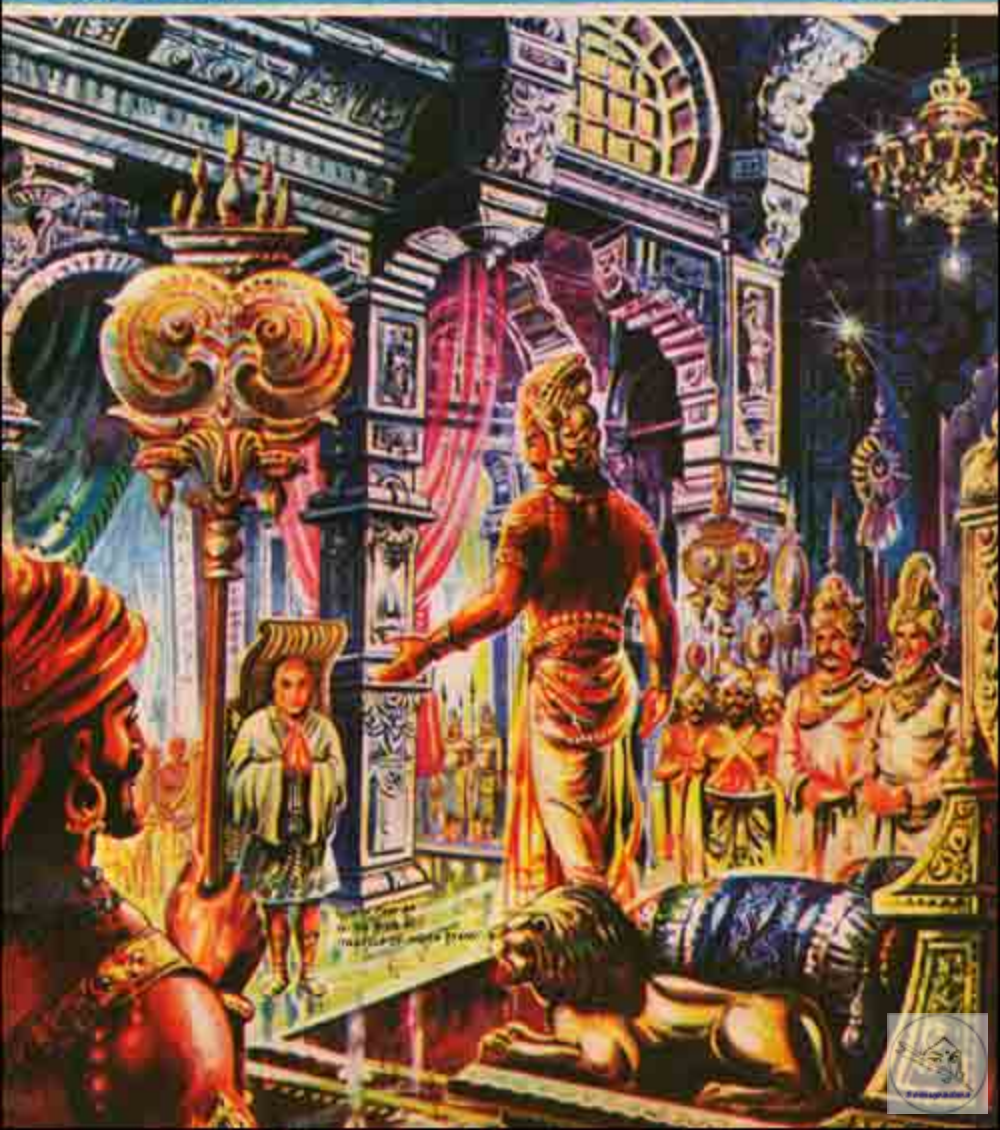


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Man's brain, with its greater size and powers, makes him the superior animal. His mind controls everything he thinks and does. Each person has a unique mind of his own. ... in thought, I.Q., aptitude and memory.



Aptitude is the capacity to acquire skill in a particular field. **Bobby Fischer** (born March 9, 1943) has a unique aptitude for chess, with an I.Q. measuring 187. He's the youngest ever International Grandmaster winning the title at 15!

I.Q. (Intelligence quotient) is the ratio of a person's mental age to his age in years. It is believed to be a measure of human intelligence. I.Q. is measured in numbers. 100 is taken to be average, 150 is genius level. **Kim Ung-Yong** of South Korea has the maximum recorded I.Q. - it's 210!



Thinking is a process by which your mind works to feel, do things and formulate ideas. One of the greatest thinkers of all time was **Plato**, the Greek philosopher (427 B.C. - 347 B.C.). He believed that true knowledge is eternal.



Memory is the ability to recall items and keep them in mind. The mind has a tremendous capacity to memorize. **Mehmed Halici** of Turkey recited 6,666 verses of the Koran (a world record) in 6 hours, on October 14, 1967.



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**PLUS ELEVEN COMPLETE STORIES
AND SEVEN OTHER FEATURES.**

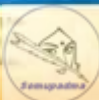
GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

घातयितुमेव नीचः पराहृत्य वेत्ति न प्रसाधयितुम् ।
पातयितुमस्ति क्षत्रितर्जनीवृक्ष न बोधयितुम् ॥

*Ghātayitumeva nīcaḥ parāhṛtya veti na prasādhayitum
Pātayitumasti kṣatritarjanīvṛkṣaṁ na bodhayitum*

Like an evil wind that can only uproot a tree but can never raise one, the petty-minded men know how to harm others' interests, never to promote them.

The Panchatantram



Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

TRUE ADVENTURES

We are sure, you have enjoyed the series *Man Made Marvels*. The series ended with the story of Taj Mahal in the last issue of your magazine.

Marvellous indeed are the monuments like the Pyramids and the Taj built by our ancestors. Behind them are lofty dreams and great courage.

But dreams and courage are the qualities of mind. They are expressed not only through monuments, but also in man facing dangerous situations, going to explore unknown regions, battling against calamities, and combating forces that are hostile.

From the next issue of your magazine begins a new series - *True Adventures*. Each issue will contain a complete and illustrated account of an escape or an exploration or a detection, covering the wide world and different fields of action. They will be interesting, informative, and exciting. What is most important, they are true.



The Shroud of Christ

Twentyfive scientists devoted a long time to examining the piece of cloth famous as the Shroud of Turin.

The Shroud bears the outline of the figure of a bearded man—imprinted with blood. Many believed that the imprint was that of Jesus Christ. The Shroud had covered his body soon after the Crucifixion. But many had their doubts about it.

The scientists who have now completed their report feel sure that the Shroud is not fake. It is 2000 years old and was made in that area of Palestine where the Crucifixion took place. The mark on it is due to blood.



Photo: Anil Sharma

The Monkey And The Chic

If men have monkeys for their pets, a monkey at Pondicherry has its pet too—a chic. The crafty monkey chooses a roof-top or a tree and plays with its pet and feeds it. Scores of people gather below. The monkey grows rich with gifts of bananas and biscuits. It enjoys them and obliges its pet to partake of those delicacies instead of worms or insects. It allows the chic only limited freedom of movement.



FLASH

Can You Ride a Blue Horse?

The challenge is not fantastic because the blue horse is not fantastic.

Studs of blue horses have been located in the dense forest of Chandrapur, in the district of Koraput, Orissa. Those who have seen them say that they look luminous and charming against the light of the dawn. But they shun human beings and run away at great speed.



He Influenced Himself

Scenes of crime in the films have influenced many spectators to take to crimes. But here is an incident with a difference!

The young Spanish actor Jose Antonio received a Golden Bear Award at the Berlin Film Festival for his role as a bank-robber. Back in his city, Madrid, he received much ovation.

Soon a bank in Madrid was robbed. The robbery was done exactly as it had been shown in the film. The thief drove away. Perhaps he would never have been caught but for an accident to his car.

He was found to be no other than Jose Antonio. His successful role in the film had inspired him to try out the role in real life!



THE LEGEND OF THE GOLDEN VALLEY

—By Manoj Das

(Story so far: In the Golden Valley an earthquake brings to light the golden image of a charming maiden. The young Raju sees it. In order to know the secret of breathing life into the image, he crosses the mysterious waterfall and finds himself in the Land of the Holy Dragon where everybody is busy pursuing knowledge, but nobody knows how to smile. Raju is taken prisoner for killing the dragon, but the king is kind to him. The king and the priest shared all the power between them, and the wicked priest was plotting against the king. But the king happened to kill the priest.)

6. THE MIRACULOUS WATER MELON

The king stood dazed. The sword fell off his hand. Raju picked it up and put it back in the sheath that hung from the king's waist-belt.

"My lord, a king ought not to be without a sword," Raju said with a smile, trying to make the situation light.

"But what I saw in the Mind-Mirror—the priest as my enemy—was that true?" asked the king.

The two scholars who had invented the mirror looked grave. "Why don't you try it again, Your Majesty?" one of them asked.

"That is a good idea," said the king as if to himself. After a moment's pause, he said again, looking at Raju, "The Priest thought that you were a demon in the guise of a man. You

have come here to harm us. Let me see if the mirror can give me some idea about you—your attitude towards me."

The king looked into the mirror thinking of Raju. The others waited with bated breath.

The king's look grew intent. Soon he smiled lovingly.

"Young man, you have nothing in your mind but goodwill for me. You are out on a mission. You are expecting my help in your onward journey," he said.

Tears of joy drizzled in Raju's eyes. "My lord, you have said what I wished to tell you. I have to go to the land beyond, seeking the boon for which I am out. Help me, please!"

The king looked pensive. He bade the two scholars goodbye and then said, "We know of



land farther beyond our country—although none of us has ever been there. A row of hills separates that land from ours. There are hollows along the hills. A strange kind of smoke is emitted by those hollows. No living creature can pass through that deadly wall of smoke."

"My lord, you know, you alone can help me go beyond that smoke!" said Raju with a twinkle in his eyes.

"I don't know how!"

"My lord, can't you pass on the secret of dissolving myself on this side of the hills and then materialising on the other side?"

The king looked grave again.

"My lord, if I succeed in my mission, I'll bring a boon for you too—the boon of smile," Raju said pleadingly.

"The boon of smile! I do not know what it is exactly. Nevertheless, I have a feeling that it is something great. But what you wish to know is too precious a secret, my boy! Only two persons knew it, the priest and myself."

"How can that be so, my lord? Those savants who discovered the secret must have known that too!" Raju expressed his doubt.



The king sighed. "They knew," confessed the king. "But the priest had seen to it that they never practised it."

"In other words, the priest put the savants to death after they had passed on the secret to him."

The king kept quiet.

Raju had to wait a week to let the king make up his mind. During the week he became more and more friendly with the young prince.

"What a lovely and witty prince! And what a pity that he cannot smile! I wish I could show him how to smile. But I cannot smile myself in



The king had been accompanied by the prince. Both of them waved to Raju as he applied the secret on himself and got dissolved.

It took some time for Raju to realise that he had got dissolved and had returned to his form. He felt that he was lying on a slab of stone. But around him all was dark. The novel experience had left him extremely tired. He tried, but could not move his limbs.

As he rolled his eyes—that is all he could do—they met what seemed to be a pair of bluish diamonds. Before long he understood that he lay just in front of a hermit. The hermit's piercing eyes met his.

Was he meeting yet another naughty priest—the guardian of this new land? He wondered.

"Who are you? How did you pop up right inside my cave that has remained shut for centuries?" asked the hermit. His voice betrayed genuine surprise.

The cave was faintly and soothingly lighted by some luminous stones heaped in a corner. Raju sat up and passed a hurried look on his environment.

"Centuries? D'you mean th

cursed kingdom!" Once Raju cried out with anguish.

That moved the king. He led Raju to the frontier and taught him the secret. Raju had thought that it would be a very complicated science. But it proved to be otherwise. "What a simple law is operating behind such a marvellous feat!" he exclaimed.

"Remember, you cannot go very far while dissolved. Do not forget to will very strongly to materialise yourself just on the other side of the wall of smoke," warned the king and he added, "It is not safe to remain dissolved for long."

you've never been out for centuries?" he asked, betraying no less surprise.

"I mean exactly that. But what about my question?"

Raju narrated his story as briefly as he could. The hermit shut his eyes and sat motionless. An hour passed. He opened his eyes and kept his hand on Raju's head. "You are a good soul. That is why the dissolved elements of your being were attracted towards me and you are here," he said.

Raju felt as if he had a dip in a lake of tonic! All his tiredness was gone. Peace and joy enlivened his limbs. He understood that unlike the priest of the Land of the Holy Dragon, the hermit was a man of compassion and his power was beneficent.

"Let's go out. You'll see a new land. I'll see it after a long long time," said the hermit.

Both stood near the mouth of the cave shut by a rock. Raju tried to move the rock to spare the hermit the pain. But he could not shift it even by the breadth of a hair.

"I'll do it," said the hermit casually and he once blowed against the boulder. It tumbled off.



They came out to the open. Before them, below the hill, lay a wide stretch of land marked by elegant houses.

"O God! What happened to the forest and the green pastures? What happened to those lovely trees around this cave abounding in birds?" asked the hermit with remorse and anxiety.

At Raju's asking he said: This was once a dense forest. Himself excepting not a soul lived there.

A poor man, harassed by his king, once took refuge below the hill. He was dying of thirst and hunger. His attention was drawn by some chirping birds on



of his Yogic power and created a melon a day for the birds.

"Great Soul, kindly change me into a bird so that I too can live on the melons," prayed the man.

"Better I redouble the melon's size so that you and the birds can share it," said the hermit.

The man bowed his head in gratitude. But when he lifted it, he was found looking quite pensive.

"What worries you?" asked the hermit.

"How to thank you is my first worry. The second is my family that is left behind," answered the man.

"Bring it along! Let it thrive on the melon too!"

The man bowed his head again. But he looked pensive when he raised his head.

"What's the worry again?" asked the hermit.

"The same: how to thank you. Secondly, how to forget my relatives and friends while I enjoy the water-melon with my family."

"Bring them along!"

"O Compassion Incarnate! Those tummies that I'll bring here will multiply in no time. How big can the water-melon be to keep on feeding them?" asked

the hill. He looked up and saw them enjoying a water-melon.

He climbed the hill. The birds had by then departed, leaving their half-eaten melon behind. The man devoured it like a demon. Satisfied, he started wondering how those tiny birds could lift a large water-melon that high! Soon he found out that it had grown on the hill itself.

"Whoever had heard of water-melons growing on a hill!" he muttered.

"You are surprised, are you?" the hermit, emerging from his cave, asked him. He informed the man that he spent a wee bit



the poor man.

The hermit remained thoughtful for a moment. He then said, "I intend entering the cave. I'll be in a trance—God alone knows for how long. But the bit of my power I have allocated for the water-melon will continue the miracle,

"Come here every evening and shout out the number of people you have to feed the next day. A water-melon of the right size will be hanging here in the morning. You can distribute it among all. Whoever eats it will never care for any other food."

The poor man soon returned there with his family and relatives. They settled down in small huts in the green valley spreading out from the foot of the hill. The hermit taught them that the goal of life was to

realise Truth. Now that they won't have to bother for their food, they should devote their time to achieve the goal. He taught them how to meditate and how to offer their lives to God.

The daily water-melon kept them satisfied.

The hermit then entered the cave and shut it with a rock. Aeons had passed.

Raju heard the story with great amazement. "Baba!" he said addressing the hermit, "the prosperous town we see before us must have been developed by the heirs of those refugees. I can see the water-melon creeper on the cave. I shouldn't be surprised if they still collect the fruit every day."

"Let's enjoy a stroll down the town," proposed the hermit. Raju agreed.

(To Continue)



THE FIGHTER WHO WAS A SCHOLAR

"Gentleman, here is an urgent telegram for you," said a postman, face to face with an Indian, in an European street.

The name on the telegram read: V.V.S. Aiyar. Returning it quietly to the postman, the Indian said, "Sorry, this has nothing to do with me. I am Vir Vikram Singh."

The postman retreated. The Indian walked on at a leisurely pace, as carefree as one could be.

But was he really that? A world of care and anxiety was in his head. But he had mas-

tered the art of looking composed. He was, indeed, V.V.S. Aiyar!

Why then did he disown the telegram?

He knew that it was a trap set up by the police. The postman was a disguised policeman. Had V.V.S. shown any slight sign of curiosity for the telegram, he would have been arrested.

V.V.S. was a wanted man because he was organising movements abroad to fight against the British Raj in India. He had been a great friend of



Savarkar of whom you have already read.

V.V.S. Aiyar, born at Tiruchi in 1881, was a brilliant student. He qualified himself as a barrister in London, but for setting up a legal practice, he was required to pledge allegiance to the British Crown. He refused to do that.

The India House—a lodge for Indian students in London—had become the centre of revolutionary activities. The famous Scotland Yard—The British Detective Department—had planted some spies in the house. To avenge this, Aiyar did something novel! He chose a daring Indian youth, M.P.T. Acharya, and put him in the Scotland Yard! Acharya sold heaps of false information to the detective officers for heavy amounts. The money was used by the revolutionaries, for their own purpose. V.V.S. inspired many youths with the idea of patriotism. He became their loving leader.

Gradually it became very difficult for V.V.S. to carry on his activities on the foreign soil. He came over to Pondicherry, then a French colony. He devoted himself to two important works: to enrich the Tamil



literature and to inform the world of the greatness of the Tamil heritage. He translated into English the *Kural* of Tiruvalluvar. He also established a nationalist educational institute at Shermadevi.

His life, however, was cut short by an accident. His daughter slipped into a waterfall. While trying to rescue her, he lost his life.

The country is celebrating the birth centenary of this great patriot this year.

When Goa was to be sold!

Of several little-known episodes concerning India's struggle



for freedom, one is recorded by C. C. Datta, who belonged to the I.C.S. (Indian Civil Service), the most coveted service in British India. He was a secret patron of the revolutionaries.

Goa was then a colony of the Portuguese. A group of ambitious revolutionaries proposed to buy Goa off the Portuguese. Surprisingly, the Portuguese agreed to the deal—for a huge sum of money, of course! Outwardly a mock battle was to be fought. The Portuguese must appear to have been defeated. Goa would be "captured" and declared independent. It would then serve as the base for the war to be launched by the revolutionaries with the British.

But will the British look on while the Portuguese pocket falls

to the revolutionaries? The British will surely strike!

An excellent strategy was drawn. As soon as Goa is liberated, a big power must recognise it as an independent country. If the British tried to dislodge the revolutionaries, that will amount to waging war with the big power.

Who will be that big power? Negotiations were carried on. The Russian Ambassador in India agreed to do the needful. But that was the time of the First World War. Russia was engaged in a naval encounter with the Japanese. If they won, they will help work out the plan—the Ambassador promised.

But the Russians were defeated in the encounter. The plan for buying Goa collapsed!





*New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire*

WAS THE KING PIOUS?

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. Flashes of lightning revealed fearful faces. Moaning of jackals mingled with peals of eerie laughter from the spirits.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O King, I know not whether what you are doing is in accordance with some principle or not. Sometimes even pious people are seen violating principles. Let me give an instance. Listen with attention. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: Sutapur was a small kingdom on the border of Vijaypur that was a prosperous and powerful kingdom. The ruler of Sutapur paid a token tax, annually, to the king of Vijaypur. The responsibility of protecting Sutapur from invasion and helping





it in other ways lay with Vijaypur. This was the practice for many generations.

There was a time when Ratnagarh, a kingdom on the other side of Sutapur, was growing quite powerful. The army of Ratnagarh was seen gathering along the border of Sutapur.

"What is the reason for your army camping near Sutapur?" the king of Vijaypur asked the king of Ratnagarh through a messenger.

"Never mind that. My army is just relaxing there," replied the king of Ratnagarh.

The king of Vijaypur was invited to attend the marriage cere-

mony of the princess of Simhapur. While he was away, Ratnagarh attacked Sutapur and annexed it.

The king of Simhapur, Harsha Verma, was known as a pious man. The king of Vijaypur sought his help. Harsha Verma thought it his duty to help his friend who had been betrayed. He joined his friend in declaring war against Ratnagarh. The combined army of Vijaypur and Simhapur marched upon Ratnagarh.

The battle went on for a week. But Ratnagarh proved too strong to fall to the enemies.

One night Harsha Verma sent word to the king of Ratnagarh proposing that he was willing to withdraw his army if Ratnagarh would promise that it would never attack Simhapur. Let Vijaypur fight on alone.

The king of Ratnagarh readily agreed to the proposal. There was jubilation in his camp. If the army of Simhapur withdrew, the Vijaypur army cannot stand the ground even for an hour!

At night, while there was merry-making in the ranks of the Ratnagarh army, the combined army of Simhapur and



Vijaypur dashed into them with redoubled vigour and destroyed them. The king of Ratnagarh was humbled. Harsha Verma obliged him to restore Sutapur to Vijaypur. Moreover, Ratnagarh had to pay a large sum of money as compensation to both Vijaypur and Simhapur. Ratnagarh's backbone was broken. It could never grow powerful again.

The vampire paused for a moment and then asked King Vikram in a challenging tone: "King Harsha Verma was known to be a pious man. How could he then take recourse to treachery? How could he throw the principles to the wind? Answer me, O king, if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your shoulders!"

King Vikram answered forthwith: "If Harsha Verma was known to be pious, that was certainly not for his policy in the battlefield! He was called pious because he ruled his kingdom with piety. The principle of piety was not relevant in the battlefield. The king of Vijaypur, who was his friend, had been betrayed by Ratnagarh while living as his guest. The principle of friendship prompted Harsha Verma to help Vijaypur in its mission to recover Sutapur. Besides, we must not forget the fact that it was the king of Ratnagarh who had taken recourse to treachery first. Harsha Verma only paid him back in his own coin."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



THE PRISONER WHO ESCAPED



The Sultan considered a certain nobleman of his country his enemy. When the nobleman learnt that the Sultan was trying to catch him, he escaped from his house.

But the Sultan did not forget him. He set his spies to trace him. They spread into every town and village. At last the Sultan's enemy was trapped and captured.

He was brought before the Sultan. The Sultan called his jailor and said, "Keep him as securely as possible. He is a cunning man who has evaded arrest for long. Now that he has been caught, he should not

be able to escape. Should he escape, you'd be hanged in his place."

The Sultan knew that his jailor was an able officer. Nobody had ever escaped from his custody.

The jailor knew that the prison house was so carefully built and so well-guarded that nobody could escape from it.

Even then he took no chances. He put the prisoner in fetters. Then, inside the room itself he erected a cage around him.

The fetters round the prisoner's feet were tight. The cage was locked. The room containing the cage was locked too. The entrance into the house in which the room was situated was locked and the gate of the compound wall was doubly locked.

But when the jailor came to inspect the prize catch in the morning, he saw the prisoner



gone, leaving the fetters lying on the floor. No lock had been broken.

"I'm going to be hanged. Very well, let me prepare for that," he told himself. He went home and bathed and asked his wife to cook the best dishes for him. After he had eaten, he dressed himself in his best and sprinkled sweet scent on his raiment. Then he disclosed to his family that he was going to die. Leaving them weeping, he went over to the court and saluted the Sultan and said, "My lord, the prisoner has escaped."

"Has he?" thundered the Sultan. "Then you must die!"

"Yes, my lord," said the jailor. "I'm ready."

The Sultan then questioned him to find out how the prisoner escaped. There seemed to be absolutely no defect in the ar-

rangements.

"Did you hear him saying anything to anybody?" asked the Sultan.

"Yes, my lord. Everytime our workman's hammer came down on the nail while fitting the cage, he called out to God saying that He alone could save him," reported the jailor.

The Sultan kept silent for a moment. Then he told the jailor gravely, "You fool, how then do you take the responsibility for his escape upon yourself and come ready to die? Do you think that you could have detained a man who had sought God's intervention in his escape? How could you ever become a match for God?"

So saying, the Sultan waved the jailor to go away without bothering to die and sat down for praying himself.



A GESTURE—NOBLE AND CLEVER

Once the king and his minister were roaming about in their capital. They were in disguise.

Two travellers from another kingdom asked them, "Can you show us the way to a rest-house?"

"There are no rest-houses in this city!" replied the disguised king.

"No rest-houses for travellers in a prosperous city like this? What kind of a king rules this city?" asked the traveller.

A nobleman who happened to pass by overheard the traveller. He stopped and said, "Stranger! We have no rest-houses because we treat any traveller as our kinsman. They are always welcome in our homes. Please come with me!"

Next day the king congratulated the nobleman. He then took immediate steps to construct a few rest-houses.





Manohar's Music

Manohar was a singer. But the pity is, his guru had taught him only one mode of music—called Raga Neelambari.

Manohar sang the Raga whenever he was in a happy state of mind. It must be said that his singing had some strange quality in it. All his listeners fell asleep under the influence of his song.

"There is no singer like our Manohar!" said some people of Manohar's small town!

"What kind of singer is he who knows only one Raga?" challenged some others.

"He might not know more than one Raga. But is it not wonderful that he puts all to sleep by that Raga?" said some.

"How to know whether he sang well or not when we go to sleep as soon as he begins to sing? Besides, my grandma too

could put me to sleep by singing her lullaby!" said those who refused to give much value to Manohar's talent.

One evening two strangers met Manohar and pushing some money into his hand, said, "O worthy singer, this is only a part of what we propose to pay you if you'd agree to sing for us."

Nobody had that far paid anything to Manohar for his music. Now here was a payment in advance! Manohar felt quite flattered. He readily agreed to give the performance.

"We want to enjoy your song when all is quiet—at midnight. We'll lead you to the right place," the strangers said.

They came back at midnight and led Manohar to a spot in front of a bank. "Let's sit down and hear you" they



Manohar began singing.

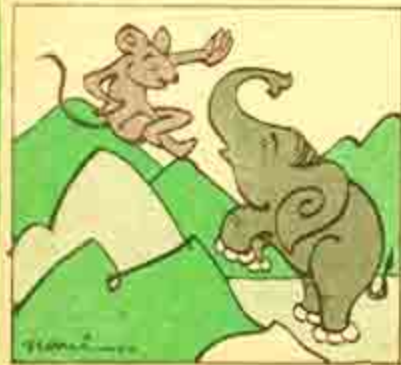
Early in the morning the two strangers were woken up by the watchmen of the bank. Next moment the watchmen pounced upon them and held them to the ground and shouted till a number of local people gathered there. The strangers were then handed over to the police.

Needless to say, the strangers were notorious burglars. They

had planned to put the watchmen of the bank to sleep and burgle the bank. Little did they think that they would fall asleep themselves!

Even if the song had its effect on the watchmen they had come out of the effect early. They had recognised the burglars.

Manohar was rewarded for his role in the arrest of the much wanted criminals.



A baby elephant who one morning saw a mouse for the first time, exclaimed, "what a small weak creature!"

"No wonder I look so. I was sick and so did not touch my dinner last night," explained the mouse.

THE GREATEST LIAR OF THEM ALL

The king was much fond of his jester. That made the court-pundit, Bhaskar Sharma, quite jealous of the jester. "Is the king's love for the jester not absurd? What does the jester, a fool, know?"

One day the king declared that whoever among his courtiers excelled the others in speaking lies would receive a reward. The jester was to decide who was the greatest liar.

The courtiers tried their best to invent original lies. One said that he had seen white crows. Another said that he had known men who had wings.

"Pundit Bhaskar Sharma, would you like to take part in this contest?" the jester asked the pundit.

"Shut up! Never, never had anybody in my family utter a lie! I even do not know what a lie is!" yelled out Bhaskar Sharma.

"My lord!" said the jester turning to the king, "The reward goes to Pundit Bhaskar Sharma!"





FALSE

Champa was proud of her ornaments. She had a lot of them and she loved to wear them on as many pretexts as possible.

She was reluctant to loan out even one of them to anyone.

She paid a visit to her maternal uncle's house on the occasion of his daughter's marriage. It was her maternal uncle, Ravi Chowdhury, who had brought her up. Luckily for her she had married in a rich man's house and could afford to buy costly ornaments.

Chowdhury was wealthy and generous. He had ordered for a number of ornaments for his daughter. But the goldsmith failed to arrive on time.

As the moment for the solemnisation of his daughter's marriage was nearing, Chowdhury was growing more and more anxious. He called Champa

into a room and said, "Let my daughter put on some of your ornaments. I'm sure, the goldsmith will be here soon. Once the bride returns from the marriage-platform, you can take back your things."

Champa hemmed and hawed and said, "Uncle, I'm sure the ornaments would look more beautiful on my cousin's person than they do on me. But, the pity is, these are not real ones. I put on fake ornaments when I travel. I'm afraid, it won't be auspicious for the bride to put on false ornaments."

"You are right. She ought not to glitter in false ornaments on such a sacred occasion," agreed Chowdhury.

To his joy, the goldsmith reached just then. "Welcome," he exclaimed, "you saved me



much embarrassment!" Looking at Champa, he said, "I must thank your frankness, child! Had you felt shy to tell me that your ornaments were fake, I would have made my daughter wear them. That would have been rather inauspicious."

After the marriage, Champa accompanied by two women, went to see a fair. The three women spent their night in a guest-house near the fair. At night three bandits took away their ornaments at gun-point.

The news reached Chowdhury in the morning. He rushed to the spot and informed the police. He consoled Champa's companions saying that he would make good their loss. Turning to Champa, he whispered, "My daughter, luckily your ornaments were fake!"

Champa had to weep hiding from the uncle! She could not say that her ornaments were not false; as her statement was!



Teacher: You say that you were a few yards outside the school when the first bell rang. Why did you take so long to reach?

Student: A signboard said, "School Ahead; Go Slow!"



THE NOBLEMAN

On a certain day Rao Sahib, a nobleman, invited all the people of his village to eat at his house all the three times. All but Ram, the poorest man in the village, responded.

"Why did you not come to the feast?" Rao Sahib asked Ram the next day.

"Sir, I earn my livelihood by selling fire-wood. Yesterday nobody bought my ware because the villagers were not required to cook. I had to go without food," said Ram.

"But why did you not come to my house for food?" asked the nobleman, even more surprised.

"Sir, all the others went in response to your invitation only. They had enough food to eat in their homes. Had I gone, it would have been because I had no food. In other words, I would have gone there as a beggar, not as a guest. That is what I did not like to do," explained Ram.

Thereafter if anybody referred to Rao Sahib as the nobleman, he corrected him, saying, "It is Ram who is the true nobleman!"



Three Friends

There was a lake in a forest. In the lake lived a tortoise. In the hollow of a tree that stood near the lake lived a woodpecker. And in a bush that had grown between the lake and the tree lived an antelope.

The three were friends.

One day a hunter who lived on the fringe of the forest saw the charming antelope. In the evening he planted a snare near the lake.

At night the antelope was trapped. He cried out. The

tortoise came out of the lake and the woodpecker hopped down from his shelter. They watched the plight of their friend.

"Tortoise dear, try to cut the snare by your teeth. I will do my best to delay the hunter," said the woodpecker.

The tortoise began his work immediately. But the leather ropes of the snare were tough. It took him long and hard labour to make any headway.

The woodpecker sat atop a



tree in front of the hunter's hut. From time to time he flew down to the lake-side to encourage the tortoise in his work and to keep the antelope's spirit up.

Before dawn the hunter came out of his hut, a dagger in hand. Instantly the woodpecker made a dive and struck him in the face.

"This is a bad omen," said the hunter. He went back into his hut and waited for a while. Then he came out through the door at the back. The woodpecker had anticipated this. He made a dive again and struck him in the face.

"An inauspicious beginning of the day!" grumbled the

hunter to himself. He re-entered his hut and waited till the sunrise.

The woodpecker made a dive again when the hunter started on his journey for the third time. But the fellow raised his dagger to strike the bird. The woodpecker realised that he had been determined to proceed on his way.

The woodpecker flew down to the lake-side. "Quick, friend, quick," he told the tortoise. The poor tortoise was bleeding in his mouth. There was still a knot to be cut.

The hunter was approaching the spot. The deer gave a pull. The remaining knot got snap-



ped. He ran away.

But the hunter was there before the tired tortoise could enter the lake. He picked up the tortoise and put him in his bag and began walking towards his hut.

The antelope saw that the tortoise was going to lose his life. He appeared before the hunter and ambled about as if he had been wounded. The hunter grew hopeful of catching him. He kept his bag down and followed the antelope. The antelope was never too fast. The hunter was about to lay his hands on him several times.

The antelope led the hunter farther and farther. Then sud-

denly he took to a short-cut and, at a lightning speed, reached the spot where the bag with the tortoise lay. With his horns he carried the bag to the lake-side. Then he pierced it open. The tortoise came out. "Enter the water immediately, friend!" said the antelope and he hid in the bush.

Minutes later the hunter reached there to find his bag empty and torn.

"It is a bad day!" he muttered and retired to his hut.

The three friends went over to the other side of the lake. They lived long and lived happily.

—From the *Buddha Jatakas*





STORY OF INDIA - 55

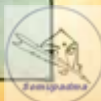
TRAVELS OF HIUEN TSANG (2)

Hiuen Tsang was fascinated at the sight of Prayag, the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. He saw not only innumerable men and women having their dips at the confluence, but also a troop of monkeys and a herd of deer doing the same.

Hiuen Tsang reached the famous Buddhist University of Nalanda. He was given a warm reception. Two hundred scholars surrounded him and, with flowers and incense in their hands, led him through the magnificent archway of the University.



The director of the University was a great savant, Shilabhadra, then aged hundred and six. The old master revealed how he had a vision of Hiuen Tsang's arrival. Despite his great age and sickness, Shilabhadra undertook to guide Hiuen Tsang.





The University had large buildings and Stupas, amidst gardens and beautiful lakes abounding in lotuses. There was an 80-foot-high copper image of the Buddha. Scholars from all over India and from Tibet, Sri Lanka, and Java studied there. There was a 9-storeyed library.

While there, one night Hiuen Tsang had a strange dream. He saw that all the magnificent buildings had disappeared. In their place there was a meadow with old houses and wild shrubs. A number of buffaloes were grazing.



He also saw a luminous figure in his dream pointing at a distant fire and asking him to leave for his country as soon as possible. After Hiuen Tsang's departure Nalanda was actually destroyed by a terrible fire.



Upon a hill stood a sandal-wood image of the Buddha. It was said that if a garland thrown at the image slipped onto its hand, the thrower's desire would be fulfilled. Hiuen Tsang flung three garlands, desiring to be a true devotee, and they hung on the Buddha's head and two hands!

There were often wars between Emperor Pulakeshin and Emperor Harshavardhana. Hiuen Tsang records how Pulakeshin's side made elephants intoxicated and let them loose on their enemy. The drunken elephants created a havoc.



Emperor Harshavardhana invited Hiuen Tsang to his court. The Emperor and his Buddhist sister, Rajyashri, celebrated his arrival in their court with great pomp and ceremony. Hiuen Tsang was charmed by the Emperor's love of knowledge.





Harshayardhana convened a large assembly at Kanyakubja. It was attended by thousands of people including celebrated scholars and kings. Hiuen Tsang explained the Mahayana Buddhism to the great satisfaction of the seekers.

On the last day of the conference someone suddenly attacked the Emperor with a dagger. But the Emperor ducked and threw the man flat. The fellow was captured. He confessed that he had been appointed by the Emperor's enemies. The Emperor pardoned him.



Through Taxila and Kashmir Hiuen Tsang returned to China. He had come alone, but returned with over a hundred men guarding him and twenty horses carrying Buddhist manuscripts and images. He was warmly received by the Chinese Emperor, Thaichung.

THE OTHER WAY

There was a zamindar—a landlord—who was cruel and arrogant.

Once he visited a village and took a poor man to task for his having failed to pay him his dues.

"I'll pay you the next season" said the poor man.

"No. Pay now or be whipped," was the zamindar's decision.

"Is this a landlord or a donkey?" muttered the man to himself.

The zamindar would have beaten up the man, but the king's minister was passing by. The zamindar complained to him against the man.

"You cannot call a zamindar a donkey!" the minister told the man and ordered him to be jailed for a week.

While being led away, the man asked, "Minister, Sir, I cannot call a zamindar a donkey. But is there any legal restriction on my calling a donkey a zamindar?"

"There is no such restriction," said the Minister.

"Thanks. As soon as I am released, I shall re-name my donkey as zamindar.





THE HIDDEN ENEMY

There was no peace in the land. People quarrelled and fought in the name of religion, creed, and caste. If the sepoys put down the disturbance at one place, it erupted at another place.

The king made laws to punish those who took part in such quarrels and riots. But the accused people knew how to interpret laws in their own favour.

Yajnasharma was an old minister who led a retired life. He was well-known as a wise man. The king called him and said, "I am disgusted with my subjects. Everybody has lost his sense. I have tried my best to bring order to the land, but have failed. When all are in the wrong, whom to punish?"

The minister sat thoughtful for a moment. He then narrated the following story:

Giants lived in their domain in the nether-world. Among them was a young giant who revolted against their king. The king ordered him to quit the nether-world.

The giant sprang up on the surface of the earth in a hilly area. Slowly he came into a locality and began eating up human beings. Men and women fainted at his very sight. He caught as many of them as he liked without any trouble, and gulped them.

The people grew panicky. They appealed to their king to put an end to the menace. The king sent some of his bravest and ablest fighters to kill the giant. Not one of them returned. Before the giant even the greatest among them looked like a mouse when compared to a tiger.

That was a time when the kings fought among themselves. Each king was eager to prove himself the most mighty one. The people of each kingdom boasted that they were superior as a race to the people of all the other kingdoms. This only helped the giant. When he entered one locality and went on killing people there, the people of the other localities never came to their rescue.

He freely moved from one kingdom to another. From time to time a king would send his army to check him. But he crushed it easily.

One day an old king invited all the other kings to his palace.

Addressing his guests, he said, "Unless we unite to fight the giant we all are doomed. A blade of grass is very weak. But the rope made of bunches of grass can tie down even an elephant. I suggest that we bring our armies together and face the giant."

All the kings accepted the old king's suggestion. They brought together their armies. They called the courageous and the able-bodied citizens to help the soldiers in their mission.

It was not difficult to locate the giant. He had fallen asleep in a valley after a breakfast of five people from a nearby village.

Tens of thousands of men





silently approached him from all the four directions. Four young princes and a dozen generals were directing the operation. When the people had surrounded him completely, the princes ordered the attack to begin. At once hundreds of arrows were shot at him.

The giant woke up. Soon a number of soldiers climbed onto his chest. But the giant hurled them away or squeezed them to death. He gave out a fearful cry. He had thought that his action would scare his enemies away. But the people were determined to kill him or drive him away for good. They re-

fused to retreat.

When the giant saw that he was being attacked by a sea of armed men, he ran. The princes gave him a hot chase with their horses. But their horses were no match for him.

The giant ran and ran till he had reached a forest near a desert. He took rest there. He did not dare to enter the localities again. Instead he lived on birds and beasts of the forest. His wounds were gradually healed.

One day he saw a woman walking through the forest. He was happy to find a human being for his food. But the woman laughed at his sight and began growing in size.

She was a giantess who used to love the giant.

"I felt bored without you in the nether-world. I have been looking for you for a long time," she said.

The giant told her his happy experiences, followed by sad experiences, in the localities.

"How could you make the mistake of going to live in the human locality without changing your form? Have you forgotten the secret of reducing yourself to the size of a man?" asked the giantess.



The giant realised his blunder. At the advice of the giantess he assumed the form of a man. The giantess became a woman.

Then both went and lived among the human beings. They spread the poison of animosity among the people. They inspired quarrels between kingdoms or between races or between religious groups. While the people were busy fighting, they stole away some of them and ate them up.

They taught their children to do the same. "Always pretend to be the benefactors of mankind. Never show what your true motive is. Instigate one against the other in such a way that you are never found out," the giantess told her children time and again.

The old minister concluded

his story, saying, "My lord, you need not think that all the people are bad. That is never the case. The fact is, they are misled by the wicked giants hiding among us in the guise of human beings. Your first concern should be to find out who they are. Capture them and punish them. Your second concern should be to caution the people against the tricks of the wicked."

The king directed his attention to find out the wicked people breeding hatred in the name of caste, religion, race, region and such other ideas that came handy to them. He arrested them and punished them, without any fear for their position and power. He told the people the truth about their mischief.

Before long peace returned to the land.





Travels Through India

ATHENS OF SOUTH INDIA

"Boys, I'm driving to Athens tomorrow," said Mr. Sadasivam and he asked, "Would you like to accompany me?"

Ravi and Raman looked at each other. Driving to Athens? What does Mr. Sadasivam mean? Obviously, it is a slip of the tongue. He means flying!

"I mean Athens of South India!" Mr. Sadasivam added soon. "Can you say which is the city?"

Ravi and Raman blinked and scratched their heads.

"I don't blame you for not knowing the answer. This is how in British days Europeans used to pay their tribute to one

of our cities—Madurai," said Mr. Sadasivam.

"Madurai! Are you going there? We'd love to accompany you, Uncle!" exclaimed the two boys.

"But why it was called the Athens of South India?" asked Shyam Gupta.

"As Athens was famous for its cultural and scholarly pursuits in Europe, so was Madurai. It is the oldest city in the South. It had an academy consisting of critics, poets and savants that was highly esteemed by kings and commoners".

It was only when Mr. Sadasivam's guests stood before the famous Meenakshi Temple of Madurai that they realised how imposing a worthy past can be to this day!

The grand old temple with its ten majestic Gopurams stood at the centre of the city, its outer walls forming a rectangle 847 feet by 792 feet. The two sanctuaries housing Goddesses

Meenakshi, the presiding deity, and Lord Sundareswara, Her consort, were the oldest monuments in the group—a guide explained to them. The other parts of the temple had been destroyed by Malik Kafur in the early 14th century. Two hundred years later Viswanath Naik, the ruler of Madurai, removed all trace of Kafur's vandalism. He rebuilt the monuments where they had originally stood.

The young visitors were charmed to see the artistic sculptures on the theme of Shiva in the temple. No less thrilling was the court of thousand pillars as well as the 'Musical Pillars' that produced varied notes when properly tapped.

"Who founded the city?"

asked Ravi.

"We can safely say that it is the temple of Meenakshi that founded the city, for the city grew around the temple," answered Mr. Sadasivam.

"Very well. Who founded the temple?" asked Raman.

"It is not possible to say, my boy," answered Mr. Sadasivam. "Legend says that once the area was marked by a dense forest. It was Indra who came into the forest for penance and felt the presence of Lord Shiva here. You can say that he was the first worshipper of Lord Shiva in the forest that afterwards became known as Madurai."

"What is the significance of the name, Madurai?" asked Shyam Gupta.



"After Indra it was a king who felt the sanctity of the place. He founded a shrine and built a town around it. One night he dreamt that Lord Shiva was sprinkling *Madhu* or honey on the area. That inspired the king to name it Madhurapura or the City of Sweetness. In course of time the name got simplified to Madurai."

"How come Meenakshi became the presiding deity of the city?" asked the boys.

"Meenakshi is none other than Parvati—the eternal consort of Shiva. In mythical times she had been born as a princess. Her eyes were extremely beautiful. For the ancient Indians the simile for the beautiful eye was the fish. The princess was thus named Meenakshi—one

with eyes of the shape of fish.

"She succeeded her father to the throne. The neighbouring kings thought that it would be game conquering her land and dividing it among themselves.

"They invaded her kingdom. Princess Meenakshi sprang forward, followed by her army, and wrought havoc among her enemies. They fell or fled. She was still pursuing them with fury when, in the forest, someone stopped her.

"Instantly the princess recognised Him. He was Lord Shiva. What is more, she remembered who she was—an incarnation of Parvati.

"The marriage of Meenakshi with Shiva—called Sundareshwara—was a grand affair!" concluded Mr. Sadasivam.





A Matter of Right

Shankar of Gangapur was a simpleton. But nobody could ever accuse him of dishonesty or duplicity.

But his naivety was more than made up by his wife Kamla. She was as clever as she was miserly. She influenced her husband to separate from his other brothers and build a house a little outside the village.

Shankar's younger brother, Shiv, was a singer. He roamed from place to place and sang at different institutions or functions and earned enough to maintain himself.

One day he met Kamla and said, "I'm going out on a pilgrimage to some Himalayan shrines. Let this amount of one thousand rupees be with

you until I return." He handed over the money-packet.

Soon after Shiv left, Kamla grew covetous of his money. Shankar was going to the town on business. She gave him her gold necklace and the thousand rupees and said, "Get a thinner necklace of this design with this money."

"But this is Shiv's money. How can you spend this?" asked Shankar who recognised the packet.

"Shiv is like my son. I have all the right to his money," she said.

Shankar by chance met Shiv in the town. "My trip was cancelled because there is heavy snowfall in the Himalaya," he said. "Now I must go to my

sister-in-law and get back my money."

"The money is with me. But I cannot give it to you. She claimed that you are like her son. She had the right to spend the money," said Shankar and he informed Shiv of her instruction.

"It is true, brother, that I look upon her as my mother. Just as she has the right to my money, I have the right to her necklace, isn't that so? Why don't you give me her old necklace after you have bought the new one of the same design?" asked Shiv.

"Why not," said Shankar, the simpleton.

Back home, Shankar told Kamla that Shiv had legitimately claimed her old necklace.

"What! That costs two thousand rupees! How could you

give that away?" Kamla yelled.

"I don't understand you. If you have the right to Shiv's one thousand rupees on account of the bond of affection between you, why cannot he exercise the same right? Is he not like your son?" asked Shankar.

Soon Shiv reached there and told his sister-in-law, feigning innocence, "Your necklace was so fine that I had no heart to sell it away though I needed cash badly.

"If you need cash here is a thousand rupees!" said Kamla, bringing out the amount from her saving.

"Thank you. You better take back your necklace, though I know you would not have taken it amiss had I sold it away," said Shiv and he returned the necklace.



THE HERMIT AND THE BANDITS

The king was in the forest. He took off his ornaments and deposited them with a hermit. Then he went out for hunting.

Two bandits who observed this entered the hermit's hut for the ornaments.

Before they had demanded of the hermit's ornaments the hermit spread the ornaments before himself and said, "Take away!"

This was unexpected. The bandits looked surprised.

"My boys, do not think that the king is ever alone. His bodyguards are in hiding. You cannot escape them. When caught, you shall lose your heads. That is what I do not want to happen to you. Now I can tell the king that I gave his ornaments away!" explained the hermit.

The bandits stood in silence for a while and apologised to the hermit and left. The king's bodyguards pounced upon them, but let them off as they carried nothing.





THE COMPLETE SCHOLAR

Long ago there was a young man named Vijay. He spent many years at Varanasi serving great scholars and learning from them. He grew into a scholar himself.

He was on his way to his native village. "I have learnt many things. But what am I going to do now? Should I practise astrology? What about opening a school and teaching? Why should I not earn my livelihood as a physician?" he asked himself. But he could not make up his mind. If once he thought good of astrology, medicine claimed his interest next. A few minutes later he was inclined towards teacher-ship.

He stopped at the Ashram of a hermit. He saw that merchants, landlords and king's officers came to the hermit and

sought his advice on their problems.

"Why not I too put my problem before him?" thought Vijay. When the hermit was alone he greeted him and asked him what he ought to do.

The hermit talked to him for an hour and understood that he was indeed an accomplished scholar. He had acquired much knowledge in several subjects.

"You meet Ramu the potter who lives in the nearby village. Put your problem before him and follow his direction," said the hermit.

Vijay had developed great faith in the hermit. He met the potter and put forth his problem before him.

"Well, first try your hand in turning my wheel and fanning fire in the oven," said the potter.

Vijay engaged himself in these



two works. Months passed. "What about my problem?" he asked the potter. "Keep turning the wheel!" was the answer.

A year passed. "What about my problem?" he asked again. "Keep fanning the fire!" was the reply.

No more did Vijay repeat his question. Another year passed. One day the potter patted him on the back and said, "My son, now you can go—and begin earning your livelihood through

any means you like. Now you are a complete scholar."

"How do you say so?" Vijay asked with some surprise.

"Your knowledge was perfect in everything. What you lacked was patience. Your stay here at the hermit's advice has taught you patience and endurance. You will be successful in whatever work you take up," said the potter.

Vijay thanked him and went home.



YOUR TOWNS HAVE QUEER NAMES

Englishman: How queer the names of your towns sound: Hoboken! Weshawken!

American: You come from London, do you?

Englishman: No, I come from Chipping Norton, but work at Bigglewade and Leighton Buzzard.



A PROMISE TO KEEP



King Oedipus of Thebes, blind and old, was driven out of his kingdom. His daughter, Antigone, was the only one to pity him and accompany him.

Oedipus had two sons: Polynices and Eteocles. Eteocles unjustly drove out his elder brother, Polynices, and usurped the throne.



Polynices met his old father and sister. He told Antigone that should he get killed in his battle against Eteocles, she should bury him.



Polynices soon raised an army and went to war with Eteocles. In a combat the two brothers killed each other.





In the meanwhile lightning killed Oedipus. Antigone buried him and then went to find out her kind elder brother.



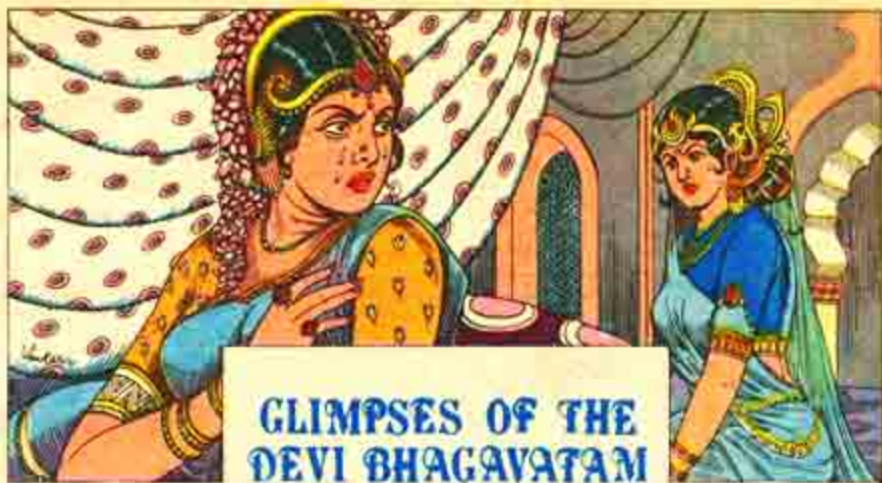
The new king of Thebes, Creon, had thrown away the body of Polynices to be eaten up by jackals and vultures. Alone at night Antigone buried it.

Next day the king dug out the dead-body and threw it in the open. At night Antigone again buried it at a secret place, but was captured herself.



Produced before Creon, Antigone fearlessly declared that she had kept her promise to her brother. The cruel Creon killed her.





GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM

The queen tried to convince Princess Sasikala that she was not being wise. It was a wrong decision on her part to choose Sudarshan for her bridegroom.

Replied the princess: 'Mother, you say that Sudarshan lives in a forest, poor and helpless. You are afraid that by marrying him I cannot be happy. But, mother, my concept of my happiness is different. Happiness is a state of mind. For me forest is no less beautiful than a palace. Beasts and birds are not inferior to human beings as companions. Besides I am not afraid of anybody. It is because my fate is in the hands of

the Divine Mother.'

The queen heaved a sigh and reported to her husband, King Subahu, what their daughter told her. The good king did not like to disappoint his sweet child. He delayed the Swayamvara and sent an invitation to Sudarshan.

Sasikala also sent an old Brahmin as her messenger to the prince in the forest. The Brahmin met Sudarshan and told him, "Our princess would die rather than marry anybody else. I believe that it is an inspiration from Goddess Mahamaya that has made her so brave. You must present yourself in the





assembly without any hesitation. Let the protection of the Divine Mother be with you."

Prince Sudarshan expressed his desire to attend the Swayamvara before his mother. Queen Manorama spoke out with anxiety, "No, my son! You have nobody to come to your rescue—not even a bodyguard—should any danger befall you. King Yudhajit might like the princess to marry his grandson. He spared you once because of his fear of the sage. But once you are out of the forest and once you prove yourself a rival to his grandson he would not spare you!"

"My mother, I feel that there is a supernatural help behind me. It is not for nothing that the princess set her heart upon me. Don't you worry, mother, I'll return to the forest with glory," said the prince.

"In that case, my boy, let me accompany you. I cannot be at peace even for a moment without you," said the queen.

Prince Sudarshan, along with his mother, got into his chariot and reached Kasi. King Subahu received him with all the courtesy due to a royal guest.

As anticipated by the queen King Yudhajit was already there along with his grandson. He was astonished at Sudarshan's audacity in coming to attend the function. Some other invitees were also heard to talk among themselves: "Look at the ambitious Sudarshan! How does he expect the princess to choose him—a helpless young man living in exile?" King Yudhajit told some of the guests, "If Princess Sasikala would reject my grandson and choose Sudarshan instead, I will not be the one to stomach it quietly. I will finish Sudarshan here itself!"

"Yudhajit, such an attitude was not expected of an old and



prudent king like you. Is it not the privilege of the princess to choose her bridegroom? Why should you take her decision amiss? It is rumoured that you have deprived Prince Sudarshan of his legitimate right. If you harass him here, the rumour will be proved true. We are here as guests. Once the princess has made her choice known, we ought to congratulate the couple and return peacefully," said the king of Kerala.

"I will have no objection to the princess choosing the most worthy among the assembled youths. Why should I tolerate a situation which I dislike? Don't I hail from a warrior dynasty?" asked Yudhajit.

"Old man, doesn't Prince Sudarshan too come of a warrior dynasty?" commented a prince. Some others laughed.

King Subahu appeared on the scene and said, "I invited you all in keeping with the tradition of the Swayamvara; but what I understand is, my daughter has already made her choice. For your information, her choice is Sudarshan".

The old Yudhajit frowned upon King Subahu and went away haughtily towards his camp. Those who observed



him soon met Prince Sudarshan and warned him against the old man's wrath. "You have no kingdom, no army. How can you stand against the vengeful old king? Better you depart," they advised.

Sudarshan listened to them with humility and said, "I thank you for your goodwill. But I have come here in full awareness of the dangers I may have to face. It is true that I do not have any strength in terms of wealth or army. But I have a greater strength in my faith in the Divine Mother. Nobody can harm me if She will decide to protect me. It will be un-



worthy of my status as a prince to leave the assembly because of an unjust, unwise, arrogant old man's threat. It will be still more unworthy of me as a devotee to lose my faith in the supremacy of the Divine Mother's protection. So, my decision is, I will be here ready to go through any ordeal."

"Bravo, O prince! We wish you best, but know this much that the old Yudhajit goes mad the moment he hears your name," said the well-wishers.

"I am grateful to you for your sympathy for me. I repeat, I have no fear for anybody. If I am destined to die

no human help can stop my death. The lion that killed my father and Yudhajit who killed my mother's father were only instruments. My father and grandfather died because they were destined to die. It is only the Divine Grace that can change human destiny," said Sudarshan.

The listeners were delighted, they left him wishing him best again and again.

The Swayamvara took place the next day. Many of the assembled princes did not know who would be the charming Sasikala's choice. Those who knew about it had their misgivings about the aftermath of the function.

Sweet music was being played. Members of the royal family and the children of nobility were busy looking after the arrangements and greeting the guests. Soon accompanied by her maids Princess Sasikala was seen emerging from the palace. The guests were charmed by her beauty and graceful gait.

Suddenly the princess stopped behind a pillar. King Subahu went near her and said, "My child, why do you stop here? Come into the hall. The princes will be introduced



you one by one. There are so many of them—scions of illustrious dynasties.”

“Father”, whispered the princess, “even a casual look at the audience tells me that most of those young men are proud, lustful and drunkards. Why should I be paraded before their sinful eyes? You know that I would marry none but Sudarshan. Why don’t you announce my decision to the assembly and bid them good-bye?”

The king appreciated his daughter’s sentiments. Why, indeed, should the princess be shown to the guests like a jewel being shown to customers? It was for her to choose her bridegroom and she had already made her choice.

Although he felt embarrassed, King Subahu advanced and, addressing the assembly, said, “My daughter feels that it will be an exercise in futility for her to be introduced to all the guests. She had already decided to marry prince Sudarshan. Believe me, I had no knowledge of her mind when I convened the assembly. It is in your kindness that you have gathered here. I am thankful to you. I appeal to you to accept my humble gifts which I should



shortly be sending to your camps and then to depart peacefully. I seek your good wishes for my daughter.”

It seemed the guests appreciated the position taken by their host. But King Yudhajit stood up and shouted angrily. “King Subahu, it is in your foolishness that you have decided to marry your daughter to a worthless youth hiding in a forest. You have convened an assembly of princes. It is the right of the most deserving one in the assembly to claim your daughter’s hand. I demand that you choose my grandson for your daughter’s husband.”



If you defy my suggestion, I would wage a war against you. Once I had pardoned Sudarshan. This time I will put an

end to him if he stands in my way. Know you, O Subahu, that all your friends together cannot match my strength!"

WONDER WITH COLOURS





A Case of Fire

The landlord of Gopalpur had a few acres of land at Mahipur. Ramdas the farmer tilled the land and raised the crop. Once every year the landlord visited Mahipur and sold the crop. He paid Ramdas his due and returned to Gopalpur with the rest of the money. He had a small lodge close to Ramdas's house for his brief sojourn.

The landlord knew as much as anybody else that Ramdas was an honest man. Although the landlord was extremely selfish and suspicious by nature, he found no occasion to take Ramdas to task.

It so happened that the landlord was unable to visit Mahipur for five years. He sent his manager who sold the crop. But the landlord was there on the sixth year.

By then Shanti, the only child

of Ramdas, had grown up into a charming young lady. The landlord saw her when she came to serve him lunch. He was fascinated by her.

At the earliest opportunity he called Ramdas aside and said, "Well, you have a fine daughter, I should say! I am ready to marry her!"

But Ramdas was not ready for such a proposal! He kept quiet. The landlord repeated his offer.

Ramdas was in a fix. There was no question of his agreeing to the proposal. Shanti's marriage had already been fixed with someone else. But to reject it downright would be to annoy the landlord. It would be very easy for the influential landlord to harass a poor man like him.

Even then Ramdas decided to be truthful.





"Sir, aren't you already lucky with two wives and blessed with a number of children?" he asked.

"So what?" asked the landlord with some irritation. "Is there any bar on a landlord like me marrying a third time?"

"There may not be any bar for you, sir, but so far as I am concerned, I cannot accept the proposal. I can assure you that my daughter too would not agree to it," said Ramdas, who decided to be blunt.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed the landlord. "How can you speak for your daughter? She would jump at the proposal!"

When the landlord found Shanti alone, he put forth the proposal in many sweet words. Shanti stood embarrassed. Just then a young man entered the scene.

"When did you come?" Shanti asked with joy, looking at the young man, Pramath. Pramath hailed from the same village, but lived in the town for his study. It was with him that Shanti's marriage had been fixed.

The landlord could not say anything more to Shanti then. But when he found her alone again in the evening, he suddenly caught her by the hand. Shanti was scared. She got her hand free with a jerk and ran away. The landlord, in a fit of anger, kicked a lantern. The oil in the lantern spilled out and the wind carried the flame to the thatch. The house went up in flames. Along with it was destroyed the landlord's crop stored in the house.

The landlord complained before the village council against Ramdas and demanded the value of his crop.

"Sir, it is not only your crop that has burnt down, but also Ramdas's whole house. How can the poor man pay you any-

thing?" the members of the council asked politely.

"That I don't know! The crop, until it is sold, remains in Ramdas's custody. He is responsible for its safekeep. He might have already sold it and might have put fire to his house himself to deceive me!" said the landlord in a huff.

The council summoned Ramdas. Before going out, Ramdas told Pramath, "The landlord has grown vengeful and is out to harass me. But I will not yield before him!"

Ramdas told the council how his house caught fire. The landlord shouted out, "This is a lie. Why should I kick the lantern?"

The members of the council knew that Ramdas was not the kind of man to speak lies. At the same time they could not muster courage to give the landlord the lie.

Soon Pramath and Shanti arrived on the scene. "I believe in the deity of our temple. Whether the fire was caused by the landlord or by Shanti or by Shanti's father can be determined here and now. Let me write down the names of all the three on separate slips of paper. I shall bring a little holy water



from the temple and sprinkle it on the papers. One of the slips of paper would then catch fire of its own. The one whose name the slip carried is the person responsible for the fire."

The council and the landlord were agreeable to this novel trial. But some people thought that Pramath had grown crazy.

Pramath wrote the three names on three slips. Then he fetched some water used for the deity's worship and sprinkled it on the slips. All were amazed to see the slip carrying the landlord's name going up in flames!

For the landlord this





something weird. Frightened, he confessed to his guilt. He agreed to bear the cost of Ramdas building a new house. The landlord also paid Ramdas the money that he would have received from his share in the crop.

Pramath and Shanti were married. One day Shanti wanted

to know the mystery of the paper catching fire. "It is simple," said Pramath. I had smeared sugar and potas on that piece of paper. I had mixed sulphur in the water. Chemistry had taught me that the contact between the two will cause fire!"

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES



THE BRAVE PEASANT GIRL

Early in the 5th century a daughter was born to a French peasant in the village Nanterre. Her name was Genevieve.

When she was twelve, Attila the Hun invaded France. Burning village after village and killing thousands of people, he marched towards Paris.

Knowing that Nanterre would come on Attila's way, the villagers prepared to flee the place. But Genevieve stood on the bridge and stopped them. "Let us hold on and pray. No harm can come to us," she declared at the peak of her voice.

Attila, indeed, was defeated before he had reached Nanterre.

Later Genevieve was in Paris when Franks besieged the city. Their leader, Hilperik was barbaric. He was drinking and merry-making in the company of his rowdy generals when suddenly Genevieve appeared before him and exhorted him to lift the siege. The mighty Hilperik trembled before the simple peasant woman and left the place!



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